

REMARKS

The Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 2-6, 8, 11, and 13 were previously cancelled. Claims 1, 7, 9, 10, 12, and 14-21 are pending. Claims 1, 7, 9, 14, and 18 are amended. Claims 1 and 7 are independent. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein.

Reasons for Entry of Amendments

At the outset, it is respectfully requested that this Amendment be entered into the Official File in view of the fact that the amendments to the claims automatically place the application in condition for allowance.

In the alternative, if the Examiner does not agree that this application is in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that this Amendment be entered for the purpose of appeal. This Amendment reduces the issues on appeal by placing the claims in compliance with 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. This Amendment was not presented at an earlier date in view of the fact that the Examiner has just now presented new grounds for rejection in this Final Office Action.

Examiner Interview

If, during further examination of the present application, any further discussion with the Applicants' Representative would advance the prosecution of the present application, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Carl T. Thomsen, at 1-703-208-4030 (direct line) at his convenience.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph

Claims 1, 7, 9, 10, 12 and 14-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner states that the claims contain subject matter not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the art that the inventor had possession of the claimed invention.

In order to overcome this rejection, Applicants have amended **independent claim 1 and 7** to recite *inter alia*

“wherein the adjustment part **18** is adapted to jet out the first compressed air from the compressed air generation source **20** to the vacuum leak generation part based on the signal from the negative pressure sensor **10**, ...

wherein a jetting nozzle **11** is disposed in a work discharge region to penetrate through the table base **3**, the jetting nozzle **11** being adapted to jet a second compressed air to the work receiving openings **5** to discharge the work **W** in each of the work receiving openings **5**.”

Independent claim 7 has been amended in a similar manner

Support for the amendment to **independent claims 1 and 7** can be seen in FIGS. 1, 3, 4(a), and 4(b), and on page 7, lines 14-35 of the original specification.

Applicants respectfully submit that the claims, as amended, are fully supported by and adequately described in the written description of the invention. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1, 7, 9, 10, 12, and 14-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Garcia (U.S. 5,842,579) in view of Mori et al. (U.S. 5,191,218) and Miyamoto (U.S. 6,220,481).

This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Arguments Regarding Independent Claims 1 and 7 as Amended

While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance prosecution of the present application, **independent claim 1** has been amended to include

- (A) A jetting nozzle **11** is disposed in a work discharge region to penetrate through the table base **3**, the jetting nozzle **11** being adapted to jet a second compressed air to the work receiving openings **5** to discharge the work **W** in each of the work receiving openings **5**, ...

wherein the works **W** are discharged smoothly and securely by the second compressed air from the jetting nozzle **11**, regardless of a suction power from the vacuum suction channel **7** determined by the work load rate, and

- (B) A plurality of work receiving openings **5** penetrating through the conveyor table **2** for receiving works **W** therein, ...

wherein the circular-shaped vacuum suction channel **7** is disposed on a surface of the table base **3** facing the conveyor table **2**, and the minute sectional suction channels **6** are disposed on a surface of the conveyor table **2** facing the table base **3**."

Independent claim 7 has been amended in a similar manner.

Support for the novel combination of features set forth in each of **independent claims 1 and 7** can be seen, for example, in FIGS. 4(a) and 4(b). See also, page 6, lines 31-36 and page 7, lines 14-35 of the original specification.

The Applicants believe that no combination of Garcia, Mori et al., and Miyamoto discloses the features as presently claimed.

In addition to the arguments presented previously regarding the deficiencies of the Garcia and Mori et al. references, the Applicants add the following arguments regarding the patentable differences between the present invention and that disclosed by the combination of Garcia, Mori et al., and Miyamoto:

Regarding Feature (A) of the Present Invention

The Applicants submit that Feature (A) of the present invention fully addresses the Examiner's allegation on pages 2-3 of the Office Action that "a jetting nozzle is disposed in a working region to penetrate through the table base, for jetting the compressed air to the work receiving openings."

Regarding Feature (B) of the Present Invention

The Examiner alleges that Miyamoto teaches that it was known in the art to utilize a minute sectional channel that extends only to a point that is part way across a width of a vacuum section channel (53) (see FIG. 7) (Office Action, page 9, lines 3-5). However, his allegation is not correct.

That is to say, in the present invention, the work receiving openings are formed by penetrating through the conveyor table for receiving works therein, the circular-shaped vacuum suction channel is disposed on a surface of the table base on the side of the conveyor table, and the minute sectional suction channel is disposed on the surface of the conveyor table on the side of the table base.

On the other hand, in Miyamoto,

- (i) the work receiving openings (cavity) (52) are formed on the upper surface of the conveyor table (scattering disk) (5) not by penetrating through conveyor table (5),
- (ii) the circular-shaped vacuum suction channel (air suction) (53) is disposed on the lower surface of the same conveyor table (5) not on a surface of the table base (base) (2) on the side of the conveyor table (5), and
- (iii) the minute sectional suction channel is disposed in the conveyor table (5) not on a surface of the conveyor table (5) on the side of the table base (2).

As stated above, (i) the cavity (52), (ii) the air suction (53) and (iii) the minute sectional suction channel of Miyamoto have constructions which are very different from that of the present invention. It is not proper to apply the construction of (i) the cavity (52), (ii) the air suction (53) and (iii) the minute sectional suction channel of Miyamoto against that of present invention.

Summary

At least for the reasons explained above, the Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of elements as set forth in each of **independent claims 1 and 7** is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including Garcia (U.S. 2001/0008061) and Mori et al. (U.S. 5,191,218) and Miyamoto (U.S. 6,220,481).

Therefore, **independent claims 1 and 7** are in condition for allowance.

Dependent Claims

All dependent claims are in condition for allowance due to their dependency from allowable independent claims, or due to the additional novel features set forth therein.

All pending claims are now in condition for allowance.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

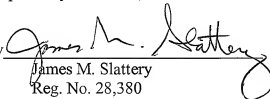
All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and that the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, he is invited to telephone Carl T. Thomsen (Reg. No. 50,786) at (703) 208-4030(direct line).

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

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